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CPYRGHT

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Incredibobble

According to the latest gossip out of Saigon a fellow named John Richardson who works at our embassy but who is really supposed to be the big CIA operator out there is being sent home by an irate Ambassador Lodge for undermining embassy policy. We enjoy the stories very much. Gossip is always enjoyable provided we don't have to believe it.

Of course some parts of these stories may be true. For instance, there actually seems to be a John Richardson. Whether he works for the CIA or not he isn't saying, nor is the CIA. Whether he is coming home in disgrace or for a pat on the back is not publicly known. The CIA doesn't always put these things on the record.

But the crime Mr. Richardson is said to have committed is truly fascinating. He is being charged in the bars of Saigon with declining to overthrow the government of South Viet Nam.

This is so strange we can hardly credit it. The CIA is supposed to make a habit out of overthrowing governments, and in a few instances—Guatemala in 1954 when it was having a fling with communism and Iran in 1953 when it was collapsing under the leadership of Mossadegh—the intervention has been pretty well established.

Here, however, we have the CIA staunchly supporting the government of an ally. Incredibobble, as Pogo would say.

Let's pursue the gossip a bit further. Now, if the CIA is supporting the Vietnamese government and if the CIA boss there is in trouble for it, then someone else must not be supporting the government—must be trying to undermine it in fact. Who could that be?

We know it isn't the President or the White House staff because after a bit of wavering they say they are supporting the Vietnamese government as the best alternative to American withdrawal or an American coup and puppet government. Could it be then that it is the embassy that is undermining the government our President—and the CIA—supports?

Equally incredibobble.

We prefer to think that all of our agencies operating abroad are loyal supporters of official government policy. We might even deplore this latest gossip out of Saigon if it weren't so entertaining.